

Harpswell Conservation Commission
Minutes for Workshop Meeting, January 13, 2009
Municipal Office Building, 263 Mountain Road, Harpswell, Maine 04079

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Maryann Nahf at 3:02 PM.

Members present: Mary Ann Nahf (chair), Anne Perry (secretary), Don Jones, Tony Barrett, Burr Taylor, Deirdre Strachan. Absent: Ann Nemrow

Also present: Carol Tukey (Town Planner), Dr Aram Calhoun (Associate Professor of Wetlands Ecology, UMO)

Minutes of the December 2, 2008 meeting were approved. Minutes of the January 6 meeting were approved as amended.

1. **Presentation on Vernal Pools by Aram Calhoun.** Dr Calhoun and her students have been gathering data on vernal pools for many years; they have been disappearing at a rapid rate lately. She surveyed the life cycles of the vernal pools obligates (animals that depend solely on this habitat). These comprise a large part of the biomass of forested wetlands, but are largely unseen. VPs now have some state protection (Chapter 335). Studies show that amphibians' migratory route trend northeast from their breeding pools, and as far as 635' (wood frogs) to 300' (spotted salamander). If these species return to the VPs in spring and their ancestral pools are gone they breed in inappropriate places. Other species use vernal pools for food and water. Since these routes are more like corridors than circles equidistant from the pools, the state could be flexible in the shape of the protected area around the pool. The state's goal is to protect significant vernal pools which are about 50% of all vernal pools. Dr Calhoun has written a Guide and developed a power point presentation and video that will be available in February. At the local level she emphasizes involving the community in surveys, education at all levels, alternate subdivision design to avoid pools, Mapping expenses include aerial photos with scale and type, interpretation, and citizen training. Grants information available from Teresa Kirschner and Jerry Bligh. Fred DeBelleau has aerial information. Further discussion: there are estimated to be 4 to 10 VPs per square mile in Maine; mosquitoes that bear Eastern Equine Encephalitis do not breed in VPs. Suggested: a forum in spring for realtors with Aram and Marcel.

2. Open Space Plan Outreach.

- a. **Q&A Flyer Format.** Consensus was to "unjustify" margins.

- b. **Focus Area Property Owners.** Maryann will assign final visits to HCC members.

- c. **Other Outreach.** 5-10 minute OSP Presentation is scheduled for February 9, 6:30 PM, HIS at budget hearing.

HTV – Initial contact made regarding Q&A program. Policy and procedures were given to HCC to review and sign. Date and format to be set.

The Anchor has submitted the following questions for inclusion in the February issue.. HCC is asked to answer add any other questions coming to mind:

What is the Plan, and what does it consist of?

What is meant by open space?

Why do we need such a plan?

How was the plan developed?

How can we protect open space without restricting property owners' rights?

What are the focus areas, and how were they determined.

How will this plan, if adopted, impact Harpswell's fishing industry?

How can citizens become involved in the planning/implementation process?

Where is more information on the plan available?

Do you have any further comments?

Forecaster. Carol spoke with Steve Mistler who would like to write an article on Harpswell's OSP.

Harpswell Business Association. Their meeting next Thursday will include an OSP presentation by Deirdre and Maryann.

d. Trails – Hamilton Place. Tony handed out a plan for trails at Hamilton Place with background and rationale for amending the original plan. This was discussed with the Budget Advisory Committee since the Brunswick Housing Authority was requesting additional funds from the Town.

Respectfully submitted,
Anne Perry, Secretary.

Next meetings:. Regular meeting January 20. Workshop January 27. All at 3:00 PM